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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; ROGER NORIEGA'S STATEMENTS ABOUT THE IMPACT
OF BUENOS AIRES MAYOR ELECTIONS ON THE KIRCHNER ADMINISTRATION; THE
G8 SUMMIT & THE US-RUSSIAN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP; 06/05/07

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Leading international stories today include former US Assistant
Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs Roger Noriega's remarks on

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the impact of Buenos Aires elections on the Kirchner administration;
and the upcoming G8 summit vis-à-vis the US-Russian bilateral
relationship.

2. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "According to the US, Kirchner is vulnerable"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for
daily-of-record "La Nacion," penned (06/05) "According to some
analysts and former (US) Government officials who followed the first
round of Buenos Aires mayoral elections (among them, former US
Assistant Secretary for Latin America Roger Noriega), Nestor
Kirchner is vulnerable, the runoff in Buenos Aires elections could
become a referendum on the Kirchner administration, and Mauricio
Macri could well run for president in 2011 as long as he obtains a
landslide victory within 20 days and he does not make too many
mistakes in the future.

"Noriega told 'La Nacion' in New York 'I believe yesterday's
elections reaffirmed that President Kirchner is vulnerable, just as
Misiones (elections) have already proved,' referring to the defeat
suffered by Kirchnerist Governor Carlos Rovira.

"Macri defeated the official candidate by more than 20 points, when
he was expected to do it by 10 points. This could push him to the
presidency within four or five years, although this may not mean
that he would be able to defeat the Kirchners, whether it is he or
she, in October."

"The US Department of State, which Noriega left by mid-2005, avoided
giving opinions about the election's outcome. According to a
diplomatic source, they keep silent and wait. Furthermore, while
(Noriega's) successor, Tom Shannon, often repeats that 2007
epitomizes 'the year of connection' between the US and Latin
America, following last year's wave of elections, his aides are
extremely cautious when giving opinions about Argentina, in order to
avoid political clashes.

"Daniel Kerner, analyst for Latin America at Eurasia Group, the
world's leading political risk advisory and consulting company, is
also more cautious than Noriega, although he highlights an implicit
risk for the Argentine Government in less than three weeks [second
runoff for Buenos Aires mayoral election].

"According to Kerner, 'the Government avoided a substantial blow by getting its candidate, Daniel Filmus, into the runoff. However, Macri's unexpected advantage could well complicate the Government's position in the event the campaign becomes a referendum on the current national administration or a negative campaign becomes counter-productive.'

"Nevertheless, and in line with the most renowned analysts in New York and Washington, Kerner does not believe that the Buenos Aires elections could alter the outcome of October presidential elections. In his view, 'it may not even alter the probable selection of Cristina Fernandez as a candidate.'"

- "Some leftovers of the Cold War"

An editorial in leading "Clarín" reads (06/05) "Just a few days before the G8 summit..., the US-Russian bilateral relationship has deteriorated because of an exchange of accusations, which seems typical of the Cold War.

"As a matter of fact, what is happening is a crisis of US unilateralism, the most conclusive manifestation of which is the chaotic and bloody war in Iraq and the (USG's) lack of a strategy to find a way out. On the other hand, the Russian government has implemented a more aggressive armament policy and has just tested a new missile with a capability to carry nuclear warheads...

"The USG has interpreted Moscow's armament activism and diplomatic offensive as a consequence of the abandonment or unfinished review of treaties for and commitments to disarmament. Partly because of this, the (US) initiative of an anti-missile shield in Poland and the Czech Republic is seen as imposing a new strategic border on Russia rather than as part of the expansion of the European defense system."

- "A political climate that reminds the Cold War"

Oscar Raul Cardoso, international analyst of leading "Clarín," writes (06/05) "There has not been such a cold political climate for a G8 Summit since the changing years of Mijail Gorbachov in the former Soviet Union...

"It is important to highlight that it not only comes down to the threat posed by Russian missiles targeting European cities (or perhaps inter-continental missiles targeting US cities) but to the fact that a pronounced division is being formed in Eastern Europe...

"The German Social-Democratic opposition has already asked conservative FM Angela Merkel to adopt an eclectic position between Moscow's demands and Washington plans to set up a defense system in Europe, which is the reason alleged by Putin that justifies his new aggressive posture.

"In other places, such as the Czech Republic, there are also some signs of mistrust towards the US project. And, while Merkel's opposition will hardly twist her arm (she supports the antimissile system), the situation recalls those times when the Soviet Union tried to lead Europe into a division vis-à-vis its main Atlantic ally."

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